**US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2016 (2)**

**Democracy can be Very Silly**

If you use the wrong formula, you get the wrong answer. Basically, the us Presidential elections consists of two first-past-the-post elections, fptp. To use fptp once is silly, but to use it twice, oh, crazy.

In New Hampshire Primaries, for example, 35% of committed Republicans – or that’s the theory – voted for Trump, but he won 50% of the delegates. That’s not fair. In the Presidential election itself, of course, the committed Republican only had Trump to vote for. That’s not fair either. In a word, fptp can be hopelessly inaccurate.

But vote they did. Clinton v Trump. She gets 47.62% of the vote, he gets 47.25%. So she wins, and its fptp, so she wins all 4 of the delegates. That’s unfair as well.

What’s wrong with freedom of choice? Why not a list of candidates – let’s say, Clinton, Cruz, Johnson, Sanders, Stein and Trump – and then let the voters cast their preferences?[[1]](#footnote-1) The voter who prefers Cruz to Trump may cast a 1st preference for the former and a 2nd for Trump; likewise, any Sanders supporters could participate with hope and enthusiasm.

And what’s wrong with a bit of fairness? If the hopelessly unfair first round had been analysed on a proportional basis, then even the unfair fptp popular vote could have produced a slightly fairer electoral college. Instead of 232 to Clinton and 306 to Trump, then, as per the following table, it would have been 269 each.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| STATE | Clinton | Trump | Electoral college | STATE | Clinton | Trump | Electoral college |
| fptp | pr | fptp | pr |
|  |  |  | C | T | C | T |  |  |  | C | T | C | T |
| Alabama | 34.55% | 62.89% |  | 9 | 3 | 6 | Missouri | 37.84% | 56.88% |  | 10 | 4 | 6 |
| Alaska | 37.72% | 52.89% |  | 3 | 1 | 2 | Montana | 35.97% | 56.52% |  | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Arizona | 45.32% | 49.64% |  | 11 | 5 | 6 | Nebraska | 33.96% | 60.33% |  | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Arkansas | 33.65% | 60.59% |  | 6 | 2 | 4 | Nevada | 47.89% | 45.53% | 6 |  | 3 | 3 |
| California | 61.46% | 33.25% | 55 |  | 36 | 19 | N Hamp’ | 47.62% | 47.25% | 4 |  | 2 | 2 |
| Colorado | 46.91% | 44.80% | 9 |  | 5 | 4 | N Jersey | 54.77% | 42.03% | 14 |  | 8 | 6 |
| Conn’icut | 53.86% | 41.73% | 7 |  | 4 | 3 | N York | 57.89% | 36.84% | 29 |  | 18 | 11 |
| Delaware | 53.35% | 41.92% | 3 |  | 2 | 1 | N.Carolina | 46.13% | 49.90% |  | 15 | 7 | 8 |
| DC | 90.54% | 4.02% | 3 |  | 3 | 0 | N Dakota | 27.24% | 62.95% |  | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Florida | 47.79% | 49.06% |  | 29 | 14 | 15 | Ohio | 43.51% | 52.06% |  | 18 | 8 | 10 |
| Georgia | 45.74% | 51.20% |  | 16 | 7 | 9 | Oklahoma | 28.93% | 65.33% |  | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| Hawaii | 60.98% | 29.44% | 4 |  | 3 | 1 | Oregan | 49.89% | 39.49% | 7 |  | 4 | 3 |
| Idaho | 27.46% | 59.32% |  | 4 | 1 | 3 | Penn’ania | 47.60% | 48.84% |  | 20 | 10 | 10 |
| Illinois | 55.41% | 39.41% | 20 |  | 12 | 8 | Rhode Isle | 53.83% | 39.46% | 4 |  | 3 | 1 |
| Indiana | 37.87% | 57.12% |  | 11 | 4 | 7 | SCarolina | 40.71% | 54.90% |  | 9 | 4 | 5 |
| Iowa | 41.71% | 51.21% |  | 6 | 2 | 4 | S Dakota | 31.74% | 61.53% |  | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Kansas | 36.13% | 57.22% |  | 6 | 2 | 4 | Tennessee | 34.90% | 61.06% |  | 11 | 4 | 7 |
| Kentucky | 32.69% | 62.54% |  | 8 | 3 | 5 | Texas | 43.32% | 52.43% |  | 38 | 17 | 21 |
| Louisiana | 38.44% | 58.09% |  | 8 | 3 | 5 | Utah | 27.81% | 46.80% |  | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| Maine | 47.84% | 45.16% | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | Vermont | 61.12% | 32.64% | 3 |  | 2 | 1 |
| Maryland | 59.50% | 34.79% | 10 |  | 6 | 4 | Virginia | 49.49% | 44.68% | 13 |  | 7 | 6 |
| Mass’etts | 60.81% | 33.52% | 11 |  | 7 | 4 | Washington | 55.57% | 38.17% | 12 |  | 7 | 5 |
| Michigan | 47.33% | 47.60% |  | 16 | 8 | 8 | WVirginia | 26.47% | 68.65% |  | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| Minnesota | 46.41% | 44.95% | 10 |  | 5 | 5 | Wisconsin | 46.94% | 47.87% |  | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| Missi’ippi | 39.74% | 58.32% |  | 6 | 2 | 4 | Wyoming | 21.63% | 67.40% |  | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| TOTALS =  | 232 | 306 | 269 | 269 |

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1. Two electoral systems – pr-stv, proportional representation, single transferable vote, and the quota Borda system, qbs – encourage parties to nominate only as many candidates as they think they might get elected. So, if the election were to elect both a President and a Vice (as in their original electoral system), or maybe a second vice as well, then no one party would want to nominate more than two or three candidates, minor parties would want to propose only one, and everything would be perfectly feasible. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)